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STATE&METRO Edition

Global warming policy could drive jobs away

BYLINE: Anton Caputo, STAFF

SECTION: METRO AND STATE NEWS; Pg. 3B

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A globetrotting attorney who specializes in climate change hit San Antonio on Thursday with the warning that a poorly constructed global warming policy could drive jobs overseas without reducing greenhouse gases.

That was the message **Tom Mullikin** brought to a group of at least 150 at an event organized by the West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

Mullikin's bio sports trips to spots like Antarctica and the Arctic to study climate change alongside scientists.

With the country in the midst of a debate on how to limit the greenhouse gases that most scientists agree contribute to global warming, Mullikin's Charlotte, N.C., law firm Moore & Van Allen sponsors his trips around the country to talk about potential climate change policy.

Mullikin argued that it would be folly for the United States to place any mandatory controls on emissions unless China and India do the same.

Those countries were given a pass by the international Kyoto Protocol as part of an effort to avoid hampering the economy of developing countries. But China has now surpassed the United States as the world's top emitter of greenhouse gases and India is third. The United States refused to join the protocol, which was an international agreement in 1997 to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Mullikin worries that if China and India are not involved in future efforts to control greenhouse gases, polluting industries will simply move operations there.

"If what we do here moves or pushes emissions to another part of the world, then we haven't moved the ball," he said. "At the end of the day, we're talking about global emissions. That's how we get to global climate change."

Mullikin is also ardently against a cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gases, an idea that has emerged as the frontrunner in the national discussion. Such a program, which is used in Europe, sets a limit on greenhouse gas emissions and then allows companies that can't meet their limits to trade or buy allowances from companies that can. But Mullikin argues that this would simply act as a tax and hasten the movement of companies to countries without regulation.

Instead of mandating limits, he suggested focusing on technology and energy conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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Paul Martin of Seguin's Siempre Sustainable Network challenged Mullikin on some points but said overall he found the presentation valuable.

"I agree with him that we need to get everybody globally," he said.

Chamber President Mary Cruz said that climate change is an issue that local businesses need to become more familiar with.

"Economically this is important," she said. "This could have a big impact on economic development and small business."

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